



# LEAD *Educator*

CHILDHOOD LEAD POISONING PREVENTION PROGRAM

FALL 2002

## MISSION STATEMENT

The LEAD *Educator* is a quarterly publication of the Long Beach Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

Our goal is to provide news and information about childhood lead poisoning prevention measures for parents, childcare providers and the medical community.

In addition, we provide the latest information on lead poisoning screening and legislative measures.

## NEWS

### Developmental delay in 32-month-old due to lead toxicity

Long Beach public health officials identified a child with one of the highest blood lead levels in recent years. "This very affectionate child would not give anyone the impression of developmental delay," said the Public Health Nurse (PHN) assigned to the case. At 32 months, she only verbalized 'mama' and 'dada.' According to Child Health Disability Prevention Program (CHDP), children at this age are able to formulate two or three-word sentences.

The child's first blood lead test was given in July 2002 when she appeared pale and anemic. During the home interview, the grandmother recalled the child-ingested paint chips at 12 months. A confirmatory test revealed the child's elevated blood lead levels at over 50  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ . This is five times higher than acceptable California Department of Health Services' standards. The child was admitted to Long Beach Memorial Medical Center where she underwent *chelation*\* with Calcium- Disodium EDTA for five days.

By August, her blood lead levels significantly dropped to 33  $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ . After she was discharged, a team consisting of a PHN, and Registered Environmental Health Specialist (REHS) and Interpreter made a follow up visit. Paint lead levels throughout the house were at 11  $\text{mg}/\text{cm}^2$ , which is ten times higher than acceptable levels. The house was built in 1928 when lead-based paint was used extensively in homes. Today, most homes built before 1978 have lead-based paint.

The grandmother said that the child peeled and eat paint chips from a built-in hallway drawer (*pictured at right*). The family received education on nutrition and environmental hygiene including a supply of non-toxic cleaning materials.

The child was linked with a developmental specialist for further evaluation. She will be followed by a PHN until her lead levels fall within the acceptable standard.

Through interpretation, cultural barriers were broken down contributing to the child receiving timely screening and evaluation. It is very important that all children receive timely blood lead tests at one and two years of age as required by the State of California Department of Health Services.

\*A medical treatment that draws heavy metal from blood.



### National Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Week (October 20-26, 2002)

October 20-26 is National Lead Poisoning Prevention Week. The Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services will be participating in this weeklong information campaign about childhood lead poisoning issues. Lead poisoning can damage a child's brain and nervous system. It can cause learning and behavioral problems. A blood lead test is the only way to identify and confirm lead poisoning in children. "The purpose of this campaign is to remind parents that lead poisoning can be detrimental to young children's health and development. It's important for parents to ask their child's doctor about lead testing," said City of Long Beach Health Officer Darryl M. Sexton, M.D.

### Children's Environmental Health Forum

Friday, October 18, 2002

This event will take place at Cesar Chavez Park from 8 am -2pm. The community is invited to participate during this informative event that will focus on the effects on children's health of housing hazards, such as mold and lead. For more information, please call (562) 570-4083.

# HEALTH EDUCATION

## Childhood Lead Poisoning and the Workplace

Children may become lead burdened by ingesting lead dust brought home by anyone who lives with young children and works with lead. Lead particles are invisible to the eye, but can be present on hands, face, work clothes and shoes. These tiny particles can spread to your car, furniture and floors, exposing your young children to lead.

Lead is found in many workplaces, including:



- Places where batteries are made or recycled.
- Places built before 1978 that are being remodeled, painted or where old paint is being removed.
- Places where automobile batteries or radiators are rebuilt or repaired.
- Places where lead, brass or bronze is melted, ground or cast.
- Places where metal is scraped or recycled.

Employees have the right to know if their work exposes them to lead. Employers must follow special regulations to protect their employees from lead poisoning. For additional information on lead at work, call the Lead in the Workplace Information Line at (866) 627-1587.

The following steps will reduce children's exposure to lead from workplaces:



- Changing into clean clothes and shoes at work, before getting into the car or going home.
- Placing dirty work clothes and shoes in a plastic bag.
- Washing face and hands with soap and warm water before leaving work.
- Taking a shower and washing hair immediately after arriving home (It is better to shower at work.)

In addition, washing work clothes separately from all other clothes, especially children's clothing is also an important preventive measure.

Children who swallow or inhale lead dust can have difficulties with learning and behavior. Most children with lead poisoning do not look or act sick. It is very important that children be tested for lead especially if they are less than six years old. Parents should contact their child's doctor for more information about lead poisoning.

## Childhood Lead Poisoning Report

Current Opened Cases under Management:

**107**

New Lead Cases For 2002:

**13**

## LEAD Educator

### EDITORS

Jose Llamas, HE II,  
Kathy Ouchi, PHN,  
Terry McAlpine, RES

For additional information, please call the Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program at  
(562) 570-4203 or  
(562) 570-4083  
(Spanish)

**For Medi-Cal and Healthy Families information, please call:**

**(562) 570-8770**

**or**

**1 (800) 832-2307**

## INFORMATION ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

California Department of Health Services  
<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/childlead/>

Alliance to end Childhood Lead Poisoning  
<http://aeclp.org>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
<http://epa.gov/opptintr/lead/>

**T.D.D. (562) 570-4230**

This document is available in an alternative format by request:  
(562) 570-4083